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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 001166

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AL](#) [IZ](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S 5/12 MEETING WITH FM QIRBI: WEF AMMAN; ARABIC LEAGUE ATTITUDES TOWARD REFORM; POSSIBLE ARAB FORCE DEPLOYMENT IN IRAQ

Classified By: AMB Edmund J. Hull for reasons 1.5 (d).

1. (C) Summary: Ambassador called on FM Qirbi 5/12 to urge his attendance at WEF Amman and discuss AL attitudes toward reform post-Cairo and pre-Tunis. Qirbi will not/not attend WEF Amman. Yemen will be represented by DFM Mustafa Noman, who has been a receptive interlocutor on GMEI and warrants some USG attention. Qirbi sees the AL moving toward a posture generally receptive to U.S. and G8 reform ideas, and believes deployment of Arab forces in Iraq is possible if certain conditions are met. End Summary.

DFM Noman to Head Yemeni Del at WEF Amman

2. (C) Ambassador Hull called on FM Abubaker al-Qirbi 12 May to urge the Minister's attendance at WEF Amman. Qirbi said he had received an invitation from Jordanian FM Muasher but will not/not attend. He will send DFM Mustafa Noman to represent Yemen. (Comment: Noman, Yemen's former Ambassador to Canada, is a polished, thoughtful interlocutor. He has taken the lead in MFA discussions with us on GMEI, taking a constructive, upbeat attitude. In fact, Noman is engaged with Yemeni intellectuals outside the ROYG who are advocating reform ideas consistent with GMEI concepts. Post recommends that the U.S. delegation engage with Noman as a favorably disposed interlocutor. End comment.)

AL Attitudes on Reform: Evolving Positively

3. (C) Qirbi provided a detailed readout of discussions at the Cairo AL ministerial, characterizing it overall as "constructive." There was of course much discussion of Iraq, including negative focus on the prison abuse scandal and speculation on nature of the 6/30 handover of sovereignty. On the issue of reform, in particular, he sees Arab attitudes moving toward acceptance of concepts included in the now widely circulated U.S. and G8 papers. Despite Saudi and other objections to positive references to multi-party systems and some petty wordsmithing -- e.g. substitution of the Arabic word "tatwir" (lit: to cause to develop/evolve) in place of "islah," the usual Arabic term for reform; agreement to combine the word "democracy" with the Arabic term "shura" (lit: "consultation"); and substitution of "NGOs" for "civil society" -- Qirbi said he saw increasing receptiveness to the principle of reform. Syria conspicuously rowed against this tide, but did not succeed in efforts to dilute favorable draft communiqu language on the Sanaa and Alexandria Declarations by adding mention of SARG-sponsored meetings on the role of women in Syria. The AL summit in Tunis is tentatively set for 5/22-23, although Qirbi noted that it was unlikely Saleh would be able to attend in that timeframe because Yemen's National Day is May 22.

Arab Troops in Iraq: Possible Under Certain Conditions

4. (C) Qirbi said there was extensive discussion of possible deployment of Arab troops in Iraq. There was acceptance of the concept, with emphasis on defining preconditions. There was loose consensus on several points: (a) no troops from any/any of the countries neighboring Iraq; (b) must be within framework of a UN mandate; and (c) command must be acceptable -- i.e. not subordinate to non-Arab commander.

HULL